

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 11-12 remain in this application. Claim 11 has been amended, no claims have been canceled, and new claim 13 has been added. Claims 1-10 have been withdrawn in response to the restriction requirement, but without prejudice to Applicants' right to present such claims in continuing applications.

1. Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §102

Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Brundage (US Patent 5,223,188).

Respectfully, the rejection is traversed. This is a case of claiming a narrow range within a broader range disclosed in the prior art. Thus, it is not a proper 102(b) rejection, as nowhere in Brundage is the claimed range specified. Brundage '188 teaches exposing the material to electromagnetic radiation or energy within the frequency range 10_7 to 10^{13} Hz (RF or Radio Frequency energy). This equates to 10 MHz to 10,000 GHz. Applicants have discovered that operating within the narrower microwave range of 100 MHz to 30 GHz provides significant unexpected advantages. For example, operating in this range allows the wet ceramic body to be stiffened without any significant loss in water. In particular, this frequency range has the advantage that energy can be more easily controlled and coupled to the ware as compared to conventional RF drying, thereby allowing the ware temperature to be controlled to just above the gel point. This has a significant effect on reducing the propensity for cracking. Accordingly, since operating in the claimed range brings about unexpected results and a marked improvement, the claims including the narrower range are patentable.

2. New Claim

New claim 13 has been added herein. Claim 13 is allowable for at least the reasons given for claim 11 and for the additional reason that it was discovered that these specific modes couple efficiently to the wet ceramic body.

3. Conclusion

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of records, Applicants believe the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicants believe that no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should Applicants be in error, Applicants respectfully request that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

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Please direct any questions or comments to Randall S. Wayland at 607-974-0463.

Respectfully submitted,

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